

DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
DELTA PLAN INTERAGENCY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE
November 13, 2017
West Sacramento City Hall
1110 West Capitol Ave, West Sacramento
MEETING SUMMARY

The Delta Stewardship Council (Council) established the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee (Committee) after adoption of the Delta Plan in 2013 and continues to coordinate and oversee Committee activities as required by the Delta Reform Act. The Committee serves as a forum to discuss, consider, and orchestrate the timely and orderly implementation of the Delta Plan and Delta Science Plan as well as a venue to coordinate on priorities and best management practices intended to improve statewide water supply reliability and ecosystem conditions in the Delta. The eighth Committee meeting took place on Monday, November 13, 2017 and was called to order by Chair Randy Fiorini.

Attendees

The following were in attendance (alphabetical):

Federico Barajas, Deputy Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region, US Department of Reclamation (Reclamation)
John Callaway, Lead Scientist, Delta Science Program
Mike Chotkowski, Bay-Delta Science Coordinator, Pacific Region, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) *(for Mark Sogge, Pacific Regional Director)*
Grant Davis, Director, Department of Water Resources (DWR)
Bill Edgar, President, Central Valley Flood Protection Board (Flood Board)
Austin Ewell, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, Department of the Interior (DOI)
Randy Fiorini, Chair, Council and the Committee
Felicia Marcus, Chair, State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board)
Kristen Peer, Assistant General Counsel, California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) *(for Matt Rodriguez, Secretary)*
Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA)
Paul Souza, Regional Director, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Barry Thom, West Coast Regional Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, West Coast Region
Skip Thomson, Chair, Delta Protection Commission (DPC)
Kristopher Tjernell, Special Assistant for Water Policy, California Natural Resources Agency (Resources) *(for Secretary John Laird)*
Carl Wilcox, Policy Advisor to the Director for the Delta, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) *(for Chuck Bonham, Director)*
Nancy Woo, Deputy Director, Water Division, US Environmental Protection Agency Region 9 (US EPA) *(for Tomas Torres, Water Division Director)*

Note: Committee member Josephine Axt, US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) and Campbell Ingram, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy were unable to attend.

In addition to those listed above, various experts and managers presented to the Committee (in order of appearance):

Jessica Law, Chief Deputy Executive Officer, Council
Ron Melcer, Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor, Council

Kris Tjernell
Bill Harrell, DWR
Erika Lovejoy, Sustainable Conservation
Eric Schmidt, Sustainable Conservation
Brook Jacobs, DFW
Mike Mierzwa, DWR
John Cain, American Rivers
John Callaway
Lindsay Correa, Program Manager II, Council
Yumiko Hennenberry, Senior Environmental Specialist, Council

Overview and Introductions

Chair Fiorini began the meeting by introducing and welcoming new Committee members: Mr. Ewell, Mr. Thom, Dr. John Callaway, Mr. Federico and Mr. Davis. Chair Fiorini reviewed the Committee's successes over the last few years including drought data synthesis; the Science Enterprise Workshop (<http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/docs/science-enterprise-workshop-proceedings-report-nov-1-2-2016>); and the Science Action Agenda (<http://scienceactionagenda.deltacouncil.ca.gov/>). Chair Fiorini noted that today's meeting will focus on the future Delta, starting with a presentation by Council staff on the upcoming amendment to Chapter 4 of the Delta Plan—the Ecosystem Amendment. Since the Delta Plan was adopted in 2013 a lot has been learned and new Delta Plan recommendations and performance measures are needed. Today's input and discussion will help shape the amendment and the Delta Plan which is intended to guide State, federal and local actions to achieve a healthy, restored Delta ecosystem. Throughout today's meeting, Chair Fiorini encouraged Committee members to ask questions of the presenters and to take advantage of the opportunity to engage Committee members in discussion.

Chair Fiorini introduced Ms. Law, acknowledging Ms. Law's double duty as chief deputy executive officer and Committee coordinator. Ms. Law reviewed the progress of several key initiatives such as continued communication and coordination on a synthesis of drought management actions; increased coordination with the San Francisco Estuary Partnership and the Estuary Blueprint; work with Committee members to track progress on the Council's administrative performance measures; and updates on progress on Reclamation's Structured Decision Making Pilot Project.

Regarding today's meeting, Ms. Law reiterated that the meeting will begin with a discussion on the Delta Plan ecosystem amendment process; a progress report on EcoRestore; a look forward at the Delta in 2050 from the perspective of several efforts currently underway; and a proposal and request for the Delta Agency Science Workgroup (DASW) to work with the Delta Science Program to update the Delta Science Plan.

Committee Presentation and Discussion: Delta Ecosystem 2050: Identifying the Desired Future and Vision for Restoration and Recovery

Mr. Melcer provided an overview of Chapter 4 of the Delta Plan, why the Council is amending the chapter, and the Council's approach to developing the amendment. The core strategies behind the chapter will remain the same: functional flows; habitat restoration; improved water quality; prevention and management of nonnative species; and improved hatcheries and harvest management. The amendment process will incorporate the best available and up-to-date science regarding ecosystem restoration and management, and climate change. Council staff also intends to collaborate with the San Francisco Estuary Institute's work towards ecosystem restoration and research. The Council is also undertaking an inclusive, multi-party approach to developing the amendment, meeting one-on-one with representatives from federal, State, and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local stakeholders. Many committee members acknowledged the difficulty of the amendment and support for the update. Mr. Tjernell noted that the value of updating the Delta Plan is that it is one of the few mandated mechanisms whereby we can span administrations with specific policies. Ms.

Marcus encouraged Council staff to call on the Water Board for assistance, noting that it makes sense to have these efforts coordinated in one place, i.e. the Delta Plan. Ms. Marcus noted that this is our opportunity to show the public how we all work together. Mr. Souza also noted that there are lots of efforts currently underway that can be used to help inform the amendment.

Mr. Tjernell and Mr. Harrell provided an update on EcoRestore, discussing landscape patterns and opportunities to achieve strong ecosystems and functionality. EcoRestore numbers are based on the 2008 and 2009 Biological Opinions from NMFS. Mr. Harrell provided an update on the adaptive management planning activities, noting the development of a draft revised version of the EcoRestore adaptive management white paper (<http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/docs/agenda-item-3attachment-34-draft-ecorestore-adaptive-management-program-white-paper>). Mr. Tjernell presented a series of maps which reveal emerging opportunities for tidal habitat restoration in the Yolo bypass. Committee members expressed appreciation for the progress being made and the rate at which progress is being achieved and acknowledged the effective use of local involvement on these projects. Ms. Ross encouraged the Committee to look at what the farming community has done already with rice, salmon, and birds to see how working landscapes can be more fully utilized to assist with restoration efforts. Mr. Callaway asked if there are efforts to develop performance measure that quantify more than acreage. Mr. Tjenell replied that they will be looking at the ecosystem amendment for guidance.

Ms. Lovejoy discussed simplified permitting. Sustainable Conservation provides policy and regulatory support to help agencies and project proponents to complete work and promotes the benefits of programmatic permits, i.e., a reduction in the time it takes to get permits finalized. Saving time generally results in saving money which can then be used for on the ground work vs. permitting expenses. Ms. Woo suggested combining the various efforts between agencies to streamline permitting processes.

Dr. Jacobs presented on the Delta Conservation Framework and the Cache Slough Regional Conservation Strategy and Central Delta Corridor Planning Process (for Mr. Ingram), two innovative planning process that provide a framework for Future Delta 2050-2100. The Delta Conservation Framework is high-level landscape scale document which provides project and regional proponents with guidelines for undertaking conservation. The framework encourages local perspectives and involvement in conservation projects. Mr. Thomson expressed his gratitude for the focus on people and places in the Delta.

Mr. Mierizwa provided an overview of the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan's Conservation Strategy. The plan is a flood risk management plan rather than flood control management and it is outcome driven with measurable outcomes for conservation. Mr. Cain stressed that this effort is a commitment to collectively address pre-defined objectives and adapt performance criteria. The plan leads with the perspective that we can't prevent floods but we can reduce the consequences of flooding.

Committee Discussion

Chair Fiorini asked Committee members what they hope to accomplish by 2050, noting that he hopes to see the further integration of farming practices that are wildlife friendly, some of which are already seen in the Sacramento Valley and the Pacific Flyway. Ms. Ross continued in this vein, encouraging us to get to a place where this type of terminology is no longer needed; it's simply how we farm. A systems approach is needed. Mr. Barajas asked what incentives are needed to keep and expand current successes. Ms. Ross recommended the Natural Resources Conservation Service as an integral partner. Ms. Ross also recommended that Committee members review a new paper from California Forward and the California Economic Summit regarding ecosystem services and California's working landscapes (<http://ucanr.edu/files/272736.pdf>).

Mr. Souza encouraged a conversation about storage and infrastructure; transparency and communication with locals; and increased science investments that will give us flexibility and allow us to have a safety net to buy time for the recovery of endangered species.

Ms. Peer recommended that Committee members check out CalEnviroScreen (<https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen>) as a way to identify pollution burdens and areas in need of environmental justice consideration.

Mr. Tjernell mentioned the Lower Yolo Bypass as a region that exemplifies what's going on everywhere in the Delta and offered to discuss the project at the next Committee meeting. This region has overlapping interest including the issue of bringing local communities and government together. In addition, standardized species-specific mitigation permitting strategies are also helpful, like those for the Giant Garter Snake.

Mr. Wilcox encouraged Committee members to make sure that existing projects are supported and implemented before we look for new projects.

Mr. Thompson noted that it would be valuable to engage local governments; Solano and Yolo counties could be good partners in these restoration activities. Ms. Law agreed and noted that the Council considers the DPC as an important partner in seeking to engage and incorporate local government input and perspectives.

Ms. Marcus encouraged a more ecological approach from the headwaters to the Bay and better integration with the human ecosystem.

One Delta, One Science

Chair Fiorini invited Dr. Callaway, Ms. Correa, and Dr. Henneberry to present on collaborative science activities including the 2017-2021 Science Action Agenda and the 2017 Delta Science Plan update. The 2017-2021 Science Action Agenda can be found on the Council's website at: <http://scienceactionagenda.deltacouncil.ca.gov/>.

During the discussion Mr. Wilcox asked how to fit the Delta Science Plan and other efforts together going forward. Dr. Callaway responded that the Delta Science Program is looking at coordination opportunities to identify how we can better integrate the Interagency Ecological Program and other efforts.

Mr. Chotkowski and Mr. Souza suggested improved identification and understanding of the ways in which all of the science efforts work together in the Delta and why it's all important.

Following the presentations, Chair Fiorini asked Committee members for the continued participation of their staff in the Delta Agency Science Workgroup to jointly implement the Science Action Agenda and to provide input into the development of an updated Delta Science Plan. Committee members unanimously agreed to continue their participation.

Committee Business

Chair Fiorini concluded the meeting with appreciation to presenters; there were no public comments.

Key Outcomes

- Council staff will engage partner agencies in the Ecosystem Amendment with an eye toward synthesizing existing action plans into the amended Chapter 4. The next Interagency Committee meeting is scheduled for January 17; please contact Amanda Bohl at Amanda.bohl@deltacouncil.ca.gov if you would like to send staff to participate.
- US EPA and Sustainable Conservation will meet to discuss simplified permitting
- Council staff will schedule a Delta Agency Science Work Group for March, in coordination with the Delta Science Program to support the update to the Delta Science Plan.

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- Committee staff will consider how the committee can discuss how to better integrate farming and restoration practices
- Committee members will continue to support EcoRestore efforts. EcoRestore staff will update the Committee at the April 2018 meeting.
- The Flood Board and the Council will schedule a meeting with the USACE to discuss how to better implement the goals of flood risk management and environmental restoration cooperatively
- Committee staff will explore the development of a science governance cross-walk

The webcast for the meeting can be found here: <http://cal-span.org/unipage/?site=cal-span&owner=DSC&date=2017-11-13>.

The presentations for the meeting can be found here: <http://deltacouncil.ca.gov/event-detail/14475>.

Next Meeting: Monday, April 16, 2018, 1-5 pm, at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria, 828 I Street, Sacramento, CA.